

The separation of work and the family: attitudes towards women's labour-force participation in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States

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**The Separation of Work and the Family:
Attitudes Towards Women's Labour-Force Participation
in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States**

Duane F. Alwin, Michael Braun and Jaqueline Scott

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The Separation of Work and the Family: Attitudes Towards Women's Labour-Force Participation in Germany, Great Britain, and the United States

DUANE F. ALWIN, MICHAEL BRAUN, AND
JACQUELINE SCOTT

ABSTRACT Recent trends indicate substantial changes in the labour-force status of women in Western industrialized societies. Many studies indicate that shifts in sex-role attitudes have apparently accompanied these changes, but research has not focused on the specific conditions under which men and women approve of non-familial roles for women. Moreover, virtually no comparative research exists on this topic. In this paper, data for three Western countries—the former West Germany, Great Britain, and the United States—are compared with respect to attitudes toward female labour-force participation. The data, taken from the 1988 ISSP (International Social Survey Program) module on the family, focus specifically on the conditions under which respondents approve of women working. Results indicate that the attitudes of both men and women reflect substantial preference for a primary familial role for women, especially when young children are present. Intra-country patterns of predictable variation in attitudes are quite similar in the countries considered: attitudes favouring the labour-force involvement of women are associated with gender, labour-force experience, schooling, and birth cohort. Inter-country differences can in part be explained by normative differences in labour-force participation rates of women and perceptions of the suitability of child-care resources, but most of the inter-country differences were unexplained by the factors considered and are thought to be due to unmeasured normative and institutional factors associated with the care and nurture of children.

INTRODUCTION

Historians of the family have argued that throughout many parts of Europe and America the Industrial Revolution had fundamental consequences for the relationship between family and work (Stone, 1977). The main locus of economic production shifted from the household to the factory, and this was accompanied by a reorganization of the family in terms of a gender-based division of labour involving the separation of work and the household. Men worked outside the home, and the economic contributions of women were

focused on the family and those labour-force activities that could be carried out near house and home. In some locales it was commonplace for working-class women to join their husbands in the factories, but in the 20th century, with rising affluence and other social changes, a pattern of marginal labour-force status for women developed and the role of 'home-maker' became quite popular, especially among the middle classes (Lupri, 1983).

Despite the socio-cultural basis for this sexual division of labour, changes in the post-World War II period in most Western industrialized countries have been influential in the opposite

direction, that is, toward the increased involvement of women in employment outside the home. For example, in the United States labour-force participation rates among women with children under 18 have risen dramatically from 22 per cent in 1950 to 67 per cent in 1987 (figures based on data from the US Department of Labor; see Hoffman, 1989). Comparable figures for West Germany also reveal some change since the 1950s, but are far less sweeping. However, this could be due partly to the unusually heavy involvement of women in rebuilding Germany immediately after World War II. In 1950 nearly one-quarter of women with children under 18 were employed, a figure which rose steadily through the early 1980s, since when it has remained at roughly 45 per cent (figures based on data from Statistisches Bundesamt; see also Sommerkorn, 1988). Similarly, the number of women workers in Great Britain has grown in the post-War period, from 34 per cent of the total labour-force in 1948 to 42 per cent in 1980 (Dex, 1988: 2-5), a change that is perhaps less dramatic than those in the United States and West Germany, given the traditionally high level of female labour-force involvement in Britain. According to a 1984 British household survey, some 63 per cent of women were economically active (Dex, 1988), although it is difficult to obtain figures on working mothers comparable to those for the USA and West Germany.

These trends have been accompanied by a number of additional changes in the family, including an increase in the age at first marriage, a delay in the initiation of child-bearing, decreased levels of child-bearing (with the exception of the post-War baby booms experienced by most Western countries), declining amounts of time spent caring for children, and increased reliance on sources of non-family child-care. Furthermore, the question of the labour-force position of women takes on even greater significance when viewed against the background of changing attitudes towards marriage, recent trends in rates of divorce and remarriage, and the increased prevalence of single-parent families headed by women.¹ While some observers have decried the breakdown of the traditional nuclear family, with its gender-based division of labour (e.g. Shorter, 1976),

it is clear that some fundamental changes in attitudes have occurred with respect to the nature of family sex roles in modern life, in part due to, and in part a stimulus to, the changing labour-force participation of women.

There is also considerable speculation and concern on the part of social and behavioural scientists about the true nature of these changes in Western industrialized societies. While it is clear that the labour-force participation of women is increasingly found to be acceptable in most Western countries, the conditions under which this is most likely to be the case are less clear. Moreover, most studies of changes in sex-role attitudes have been conducted in only one national or cultural setting, and it is not known whether the results of such studies can be used to generalize to other industrialized societies experiencing some of the same socio-economic changes (see e.g. Davis and Robinson, 1991). In this paper we examine attitudes towards female labour-force participation in three Western industrialized countries: the former state of West Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. We focus specifically on the conditions under which men and women approve of women working and the factors associated with the extent of their approval. First, however, we review the literature on changing sex-role attitudes in a comparative perspective.

CHANGING SEX-ROLE ATTITUDES IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

As indicated in the introduction, considerable change has been witnessed over the past few decades in attitudes towards the role of women in family and work life. Several studies on this subject have been undertaken in the United States; they document systematic changes towards the greater acceptance of non-familial roles for women (Cherlin and Walters, 1981; Ferree, 1974; Helmreich *et al.*, 1982; Mason and Lu, 1988; McBroom, 1986; Thornton and Freedman, 1979; Thornton *et al.*, 1983). These changes have occurred for both women and men, although changes for men have lagged behind those of women. Not all studies show such a difference,

but evidence from large-scale representative samples generally shows men to be significantly less egalitarian or pro-feminist in their sex-role attitudes than women. Attitude changes have been experienced more among educated women, those women with labour-force experience, and those with non-fundamentalist religious orientations (see Thornton *et al.*, 1983).

There is very little trend data on sex-role attitudes for Great Britain and West Germany. Recently, Scott (1990) reported that there have been some detectable shifts since 1980 towards a more egalitarian position among British women, but there are some ambiguities in available data. British women have increasingly rejected the traditional position that it is the 'husband's job to earn money, and a wife's job to look after the home and family', but they have not increasingly endorsed the view that 'a woman and her family will all be happier if she goes out to work'. In general there seems to be an ideological shift in the direction of more egalitarian roles for men and women, but because of the added strains known to accompany the multiple burdens of work and family (see Hochschild, 1989; Scott and Alwin, 1989), women do not accept a stronger labour-force role unconditionally (see Witherspoon, 1988). For this reason we here try to separate the issue of the acceptability of a woman working outside the home from perceptions of the possible consequences of her doing so.

Little comparative research has been undertaken to date that would inform the question of cross-national differences in changing sex-role attitudes. Krauth (1982) reported a comparison of West Germany and the United States using data from the 1977 General Social Survey (GSS) and the 1982 West German Allgemeine Bevölkerungsumfrage der Sozialwissenschaften (ALLBUS). She reported national differences indicating that Americans were less likely than Germans to believe that children will suffer if their mother works, but that Germans were more likely to believe that a working woman is just as likely to establish a warm and secure relationship with her child as one who does not work. Because Krauth's (1982) analysis confounded national differences with social change in sex-role attitudes, it ran the risk of

drawing conclusions about national differences on the basis of surveys separated by time (five years) and in the presence of a phenomenon that may be changing rapidly in one country but not in the other.²

Other existing comparative research on sex-role attitudes is limited in scope. Using the marginals from the 1988 ISSP data-set (the data used here; see Zentralarchiv (1991) and below), Scott (1990) compared Great Britain with the United States, Ireland, Hungary, and the Netherlands. She concluded that the British are more likely than Americans to agree with the notion that pre-school children will suffer if their mothers work, but she cautioned that this difference may be due to the relative availability of child-care resources and tax relief in the two countries (see also Scott and Duncombe, 1991).³ Indeed, there are a number of socio-economic differences in the experiences of women across national contexts which need to be taken into account in cross-national comparisons. As we will document more fully below, part-time employment of women relative to full-time employment is substantially higher in Great Britain and West Germany than in the USA, and in general, women in West Germany are much less involved in the paid labour-force than in the USA and Britain. At the same time, there have been increasing opportunities in Great Britain in recent years for married women to return to work, because of a reduction in the supply of young (school-leaving-age) workers, leaving a gap for married women to fill (see Scott and Duncombe, 1991). In West Germany, on the other hand, there may be less economic pressure for women to return to the labour-force once they have left, and the demand for part-time work among older married women exceeds the opportunities. In the US context the greater likelihood of women holding full-time as against part-time jobs may stem from the need to keep full-time employment in order to obtain health benefits. Finally, it is also important to note that there are some institutional/normative differences in the schooling of children. In Britain children begin school by the age of 5; in the United States kindergarten begins at 5 but is optional, and in West Germany kindergarten is also optional but begins at the age of 5 or

before. There are also different norms regarding the amount of time spent in school across these cultural contexts.

In the following sections we present data on the attitudes of women and men in these three countries towards the participation of women in part-time and full-time work under four different life-stage conditions: (a) after marriage but before having children; (b) when there is a child under school age in the family; (c) after the youngest child starts school; and (d) after the children leave home (the exact questions are given below). We examine these attitudes separately by gender, marital status, employment status (in the case of men, whether their wives work), the presence of young children, birth cohort, and educational level. We also examine the hypothesis (for women) that the individual's behaviour at a particular stage of her life (e.g. whether she worked when she had a child at home) will predict her current attitudes. And we examine the hypothesis, as suggested by Scott (1990) and Scott and Duncombe (1991), that the perceived suitability of child-care arrangements may account for cross-national differences in the approval of women working when there are young children in the family.

DATA AND METHODS

The data reported here come from a 1988

international collaborative survey on the family, which questioned respondents about their attitudes toward marriage, work, children, divorce, and family life. Data from this survey were collected in several nations as part of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) (see Zentralarchiv, 1991).⁴ The ISSP is a confederation of national 'general social surveys' (see Beckmann *et al.* 1991). For general descriptions of the ISSP, see Davis and Jowell (1990) and Jowell (1990), and for the technical details of the surveys employed in this research, consult Table 1.

Of course, there are problems with the use of cross-sectional data to address issues concerning the social factors that contribute to the development of attitudes. Both family-building and work-force participation are phenomena that unfold over lives; they represent parallel processes, the causal nature of which cannot readily be measured by cross-sectional data. Women move in and out of different statuses over their life-span, from never-married to married to divorced and in most cases to married again; they also move in and out of the labour-force. Cross-sectional data provide information on, for example, current marital or employment status (and more rarely, on measures of life-course transitions in these domains), which permit only a gross assessment of the effects of various factors. The deficits are, however, outweighed by the cross-national nature of the data-set, which adds to the value of the present

TABLE 1 *Technical features of the three surveys*

Country and organization	Federal Republic of Germany ^(a) ZUMA	USA NORC	Great Britain ^(b) SCPR
Language	German	English	English
Sample	Area prob.	Area prob.	Area prob.
Ages	18 +	18 +	18 +
Field Dates	Apr.-Jul. 1988	Feb.-Apr. 1988	Spring 1989
Mode	Self-completion after interview	Self-completion after interview	Self-completion after interview
Completion (%)	66.4	73.8	69.3
N	2994	1414	1307

Notes: (a) Includes West Berlin

(b) England, Scotland, and Wales

study. Still, due to the complexity of the causal processes involved, we caution against drawing fine-grained conclusions about the dynamics of social causation.

Measures

In this research we are concerned to measure the conditions under which men and women approve of women working in various degrees (full-time, part-time, or not at all). The ISSP included the following sequence of questions, which we analyse here:

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time, or not at all under these circumstances:

- a) After marrying and before there are children?
- b) When there is a child under school age?
- c) After the youngest child starts school?
- d) After the children leave home?

This set of questions is ideal for our purposes because it systematically varies the life-cycle stage of the hypothetical woman. The respondent, as noted above, was given three response options: full-time, part-time, and not at all. For most of our analysis we treat these data as categorical, but in the final stages of our analysis we use them to compose a scale, in which 3 = full-time, 2 = part-time, and 1 = not at all. A higher score on this scale reflects greater support for a role for women in the labour-market and a lower score reflects more commitment to the home-maker role. Our analysis later places the responses to the four questions together into a single score, intended to represent an overall degree of endorsement for a role for women in the labour-market.⁵

A number of additional questions dealing with sex-role attitudes were also included in the 1988 ISSP (see Zentralarchiv, 1990). Many of these questions cover the attitudinal terrain found in the broad literature on sex roles (e.g. attitudes such as 'a working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work', 'a pre-school child is

likely to suffer if his or her mother works', 'all in all family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job', 'being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay', etc.). Scott and Duncombe (1991) factor-analysed these items and found them to cluster into three groups: one assessing the conflict between a woman's job and the needs of her family, one involving role segregation or the traditional division of labour, and one referring to the benefits of combining work and family responsibilities. While we see some value in using these items to assess sex-role attitudes, we think that due to their joint focus on the acceptability of female labour-force participation and the perceived consequences of such activity, these items are less useful to our present set of objectives.

In addition to the measures of the conditions under which respondents will accept the idea that women should work in part-time and full-time jobs, we also rely on measures obtained by the ISSP with respect to several additional domains: reports of female labour-force involvement at past stages of life (such as when they were married but did not have children, when they had a pre-school child at home), perceptions of the suitability of various child-care arrangements, and a range of socio-demographic variables. We describe these various measures at the point in the analysis where they are used.

Our analysis and presentation of the ISSP data proceeds as follows. First, we examine gender differences in attitudes towards women's work role within countries and their uniformity across different national contexts. Second, we consider the socio-demographic differences in experiences of men and women across the three national studies, with an eye towards assessing the extent to which normative/institutional differences in women's labour-force experience (inferred from actual national patterns of behaviour) may produce national differences in attitudes. Third, we undertake a systematic analysis of the extent to which current employment status, prior employment status, marital status, and the presence of pre-school children are associated with women's work-role attitudes.⁶ In the process of estimating the

TABLE 2 *Attitudes towards women's work roles by gender and country: West Germany, United States, Great Britain*

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at all under these circumstances:	West Germany		United States		Britain	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
A. After marrying and before there are children (WRKNOKID)						
Not at all	6.4	6.1	7.6	4.0	2.7	2.3
Part-Time	20.8	17.8	21.7	14.8	15.9	13.6
Full-Time	72.8	76.1	70.7	81.2	81.4	84.0
chi-square	4.2	$p = .12$	18.9	$p = .00$	1.3	$p = .53$
B. When there is a child under school age (WRKBABY)						
Not at all	78.5	73.7	61.1	50.0	73.1	65.9
Part-time	19.9	24.3	28.7	38.5	24.7	31.3
Full-time	1.7	2.0	10.2	11.5	2.2	2.8
chi-square	8.4	$p = .02$	16.0	$p = .00$	9.9	$p = .01$
C. After the youngest child starts school (WRKSCH)						
Not at all	51.5	47.6	16.2	10.3	14.9	10.3
Part-time	44.4	48.4	42.3	51.4	72.3	74.9
Full-time	4.1	4.1	31.6	38.3	12.7	14.8
chi-square	4.3	$p = .11$	11.8	$p = .00$	8.3	$p = .02$
D. After the children leave home (WRKGRWN)						
Not at all	14.8	14.3	7.1	3.8	3.9	2.2
Part-time	44.4	40.6	22.6	17.9	32.6	32.0
Full-time	40.8	45.1	70.3	78.3	63.4	65.7
chi-square	5.0	$p = .08$	11.6	$p = .00$	4.8	$p = .09$
Sample size	1335	1659	611	803	587	720

influences of these factors, we construct a multivariate model for women's work-role attitudes separately for each country; it summarizes the main effects of the variables considered. Fourth, we examine the extent to which we can account for national differences in attitudes towards women's work roles by reference to inter-country variation in women's labour-force experience. Finally, we report data on the perceived suitability of various types of child-care arrangements and examine the possible influence of national differences in such perceptions in generating national differences in attitudes.

RESULTS

The marginal distributions for the measures of attitudes toward women's work roles in the

different life-cycle stages are presented by sex for each national sample in Table 2. These figures give a strong indication that the majority of men and women in all three countries approve of women working, either part- or full-time. Indeed, few would have women stay at home in situations where the care of children is not an issue. Thus, very few respondents would have women stay home after marrying and before there are children: less than 3 per cent of British respondents and only slightly more Americans and Germans. Attitudes towards women working change dramatically, however, if a child under school age is present, and on this item there are some important national differences. In this situation the majority in all three countries want women to stay at home, but a large component of these national populations approve of part-time work. Virtually

no one in Great Britain and West Germany approves of women working full-time when there is a pre-school child in the family, whereas some 10 per cent of Americans approve of such full-time employment outside the home. As we explore more fully below, this national difference may be due to differences in the perceived suitability of child-care arrangements in the three countries.

Approval of women's full-time work increases, predictably, with the growth of the child; support for a woman's employment rises for all groups as the youngest child starts school and even more dramatically after the children leave home. In the United States the acceptability of women's full-time work after the children leave home approaches the same level as in the baseline situation, that is, after marriage but before having children. In West Germany this definitely does not happen, and Great Britain falls somewhere in between, but closer to the position of US attitudes. We return subsequently to a discussion of the national differences highlighted here.

Gender differences

As predicted, the results in Table 2 reveal that in almost all family situations men are less pro-feminist in their attitudes than are women. With the possible exception of West Germany, men are more likely to want women to stay at home or work part-time than to have a full-time job outside the home. This gender difference is especially apparent in all national contexts in the situation where a pre-school child is at home: men are uniformly less approving of the idea that women should work in this situation. These are by far the largest gender differences in Table 2, but most response patterns support the conclusion that women exceed men in their pro-feminist attitudes. This may be in part due to the fact that women are more likely to perceive gender inequalities and are more supportive of efforts to combat it (see Braun, 1989; Davis and Robinson, 1991).

National differences

Men and women in all countries overwhelmingly approve of women working where there are no children in a marriage and, as indicated earlier,

few would have women stay at home in this situation. The data indicate that West German respondents are perhaps the most traditional in their attitudes towards women's work roles. This is especially apparent for the questions dealing with the presence of children at home (WRKBABY and WRKSCH). Respondents in Germany are least supportive of full-time work when there is a pre-school child at home and after the youngest child begins school: more than three-quarters think women should stay at home when there is a pre-school child and one-half support this option when the youngest child begins school. On the other hand, respondents in the United States are most supportive of women working across virtually all situations. In the situations involving young children at home and young children in school the USA leads in approval of both full- and part-time work by women. The main difference between the United States and Great Britain is in the extent of approval of part-time versus full-time work, with the British favouring part-time work for the mother to a greater extent when the family has a young child in school. The high level of support amongst British people for the full-time work of women in early marriage is not paralleled by their support for women's full-time work in late marriage after the children have left home. And West Germans are even less likely to support the full-time employment of women in this later stage. Americans, on the other hand, are much more likely to approve of full-time work by women in later life, with virtually identical patterns of support in the pre-children and post-children situations presented.

These differences may reflect normative/institutional differences in approaches to child-rearing, or structural differences in labour-market access and support for men and women across national contexts. There are clearly differences in labour-market access and support for men and women that cannot be assessed within the present database, but we expect that unmeasured differences in perceived costs and benefits of women's work reflect differences in normative or institutional arrangements. There has also been considerable speculation about the emergent tendency towards change in traditional male family roles which have accompanied the

dramatic changes in women's employment status and fertility behaviour in recent decades (see e.g. Hoffman, 1989). This is one area in which inter-country differences in male role behaviour (e.g. time spent on household work and child-care) and changes in such behaviour may reflect differences in normative and institutional factors which influence attitudes. Again, however, there is no way this can be addressed empirically in the present context. One set of factors that can be addressed to some extent using the ISSP data

are differences in child-care arrangements and their perceived suitability. For example, it is a nearly universal practice in West Germany for school children to return home for the main meal of the day (taken in the early afternoon), with the children remaining at home for the remainder of the day. By contrast, in the United States it is commonplace for children to take their noon meal at school, remaining there until later in the afternoon. This could explain the vast differences between Germany and the USA

TABLE 3 *Distributions for family, labour-force and background variables by gender and country: West Germany, United States and Great Britain*

Predictor	West Germany		USA		Britain	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Sample size	1335	1659	611	803	587	720
Birth cohort						
Pre-1930	29.1	31.9	25.4	33.1	31.3	28.5
1930-1949	30.1	30.7	33.2	29.4	33.2	34.0
1950-1970	40.8	37.4	41.4	37.5	35.4	37.5
Currently married ^(a)	60.5	53.9	59.9	48.6	74.1	68.8
Widowed	4.3	18.5	3.4	16.7	4.0	6.0
Separated/divorced	4.3	6.8	12.1	18.6	4.6	10.0
Never married	30.9	20.8	24.5	16.2	17.3	15.2
Schooling level ^(b)						
I	1.5	2.8	4.1	3.1		
II	52.4	55.7	9.2	12.2	36.5	46.8
III	21.6	26.0	12.1	11.6	9.2	6.4
IV	2.5	2.3	28.7	33.2	12.9	20.8
V	11.2	9.0	23.3	22.6	15.4	7.7
VI	2.1	0.6	13.1	10.0	13.7	12.2
VII	8.7	4.7	9.5	7.2	12.1	6.1
Children 1-17 yrs. in household	21.0	29.1	37.6	39.5	36.7	42.4
Children 1-5 yrs. in household	9.7	14.2	19.3	17.2	17.1	19.9
Women currently working	22.0	36.9	32.5	54.9	36.0	46.8
Part-time ^(c)	9.1	14.8	9.3	16.3	—	19.3
Full-time	12.9	22.1	23.1	38.6	—	28.6
Not working	38.8	63.1	27.3	45.1	38.1	52.1
No spouse ^(d)	39.3	—	40.3	—	25.9	—
For married R's only						
Women currently working	35.9	36.4	54.2	55.9	48.5	48.1
Part-time ^(c)	15.0	20.6	15.6	19.5	—	23.8
Full-time	20.9	15.8	38.6	36.4	—	24.3
Not working	64.1	63.6	45.8	44.1	51.5	51.9

Notes: (a) In the USA and Great Britain 'married' includes living together as husband and wife.

(b) Levels of schooling are not comparable across countries. Consult Appendix A for a description of schooling levels for each of the countries.

(c) Part-time work is defined as less than 30 hrs./week in Britain, and less than 35 hrs./week in Germany and the USA. In the British survey part-time and full-time work were not distinguished for spouses of men.

(d) This category applies to men only.

observed in Table 2 with respect to the WRKSCH item. It is also possible that the response differences with respect to women working when there are young children in the family are a reflection of the higher opinion of child-care arrangements in the USA as compared to Great Britain and West Germany. We consider some of these explanations in greater depth below.

Family and labour-force experiences

In order to appreciate more fully the patterns in attitudes towards women's work roles and potential differences between countries, we need to look more carefully at intra- and inter-country differences in patterns of family and labour-force experience among men and women. In Table 3 we display this information for our samples by country and gender. This

table gives the percentage distributions for birth cohorts, marital status, educational levels, the presence of children under 18 and under 6, and the employment status of women in the household. As the information in the table indicates, the definition of part-time work is somewhat different in Britain, where it is defined as less than 30 hours, as compared with Germany and the USA, where it is defined as less than 35 hours per week.

In the following analyses we take these and other factors into account in attempting to understand variations in attitudes toward women's work roles, including cross-national variation. It is therefore important to note where there appear to be some critical differences between countries in family and socio-economic experiences. In this regard we would note that there are significant differences in the extent of

TABLE 4 *Attitudes towards women's work roles among women who work and men with working wives, by gender and country: West Germany, United States, Great Britain*

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at all under these circumstances:	West Germany		United States		Britain	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
A. After marrying and before there are children (WRKNOKID)						
Not at all	2.3	1.6	4.3	2.1	0.6	0.4
Part-Time	16.3	15.2	19.1	10.9	7.3	8.8
Full-Time	81.4	83.1	76.5	86.9	92.1	90.8
chi-square	0.6	$p = .75$	8.6	$p = .01$	0.4	$p = .82$
B. When there is a child under school age (WRKBABY)						
Not at all	70.1	61.8	50.3	39.3	65.7	54.4
Part-time	28.0	34.4	35.2	46.2	31.0	41.0
Full-time	1.9	3.8	14.5	14.6	3.3	4.5
chi-square	6.7	$p = .04$	6.6	$p = .04$	5.8	$p = .05$
C. After the youngest child starts school (WRKSCH)						
Not at all	36.2	26.0	6.7	4.2	6.3	3.4
Part-time	58.9	66.1	53.3	49.2	80.2	77.8
Full-time	4.9	7.9	40.0	46.6	13.5	18.8
chi-square	10.1	$p = .01$	2.9	$p = .24$	3.8	$p = .15$
D. After the children leave home (WRKGRWN)						
Not at all	6.4	4.0	4.9	1.3	0.6	0.5
Part-time	47.4	39.2	19.5	14.2	30.5	30.6
Full-time	46.2	56.7	75.6	84.4	68.9	68.9
chi-square	8.1	$p = .02$	8.3	$p = .02$	0.5	$p = .98$
Sample size	293	612	198	441	169	337

TABLE 5 *Attitudes towards women's work roles among women who work and men with working wives, by female labour-force status, by gender and country: West Germany, United States, and Great Britain*

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at all under these circumstances:	West Germany				United States				Men ^(a) Working Wives	Britain	
	Men		Women		Men		Women			Women	
	Wk-Full	Wk-Part	Wk-Full	Wk-Part	Wk-Full	Wk-Part	Wk-Full	Wk-Part		Wk-Full	Wk-Part
A. After marrying and before there are children (WRKNOKID)											
Not at all	3.3	0.0	0.9	0.7	3.3	5.4	2.3	2.1	0.6	0.0	1.1
Part-time	14.6	16.5	11.5	23.2	15.8	32.4	9.1	14.4	7.3	5.7	13.4
Full-time	82.1	83.5	87.6	76.1	80.8	62.2	88.6	83.5	92.1	94.3	85.5
chi-square	4.6	$p = .10$	10.0	$p = .01$	5.2	$p = .07$	2.0	$p = .36$		8.0	$p = .02$
B. When there is a child under school age (WRKBABY)											
Not at all	73.2	66.7	60.7	59.6	44.9	68.3	36.3	45.8	65.7	52.3	57.4
Part-time	24.2	32.2	34.0	39.0	37.3	31.7	46.4	45.8	31.0	4.0	42.6
Full-time	2.6	1.1	5.3	1.4	17.8	0.0	17.2	8.3	3.3	7.6	0.0
chi-square	2.2	$p = .33$	5.4	$p = .07$	155.9	$p = .00$	5.8	$p = .05$		9.92	$p = .01$
C. After the youngest child starts school (WRKSCH)											
Not at all	36.2	36.0	25.2	22.6	5.1	11.9	3.4	5.1	6.3	21.2	4.3
Part-time	58.6	59.3	63.4	76.7	44.4	76.2	44.3	63.6	80.2	72.1	85.9
Full-time	5.3	4.7	11.4	0.7	50.4	11.9	52.3	31.3	13.5	25.7	8.8
chi-square	0.1	$p = .98$	23.2	$p = .00$	21.7	$p = .00$	13.0	$p = .00$		15.3	$p = .00$
D. After the children leave home (WRKGRWN)											
Not at all	6.9	6.1	2.0	2.1	5.0	2.6	0.8	2.1	0.6	0.8	0.0
Part-time	39.6	59.8	30.4	56.4	16.0	33.3	11.5	20.0	30.5	20.9	44.9
Full-time	53.5	34.1	67.7	41.4	79.0	64.1	87.8	77.9	68.9	78.3	55.1
chi-square	8.9	$p = .01$	27.7	$p = .00$	5.3	$p = .07$	5.2	$p = .07$		20.79	$p = .00$
Sample size	172	90	367	157	141	47	310	114	169	204	133

Note (a) In the British survey there was no distinction between part-time and full-time work for spouses of male respondents.

female labour-force participation across the three countries, which we expect will have an important bearing on the nature of attitudes. In the USA some 55 per cent of women are employed, most in full-time occupations. In Great Britain nearly 47 per cent of women are working, with most in full-time, but slightly more in part-time jobs than in the USA. By contrast, in Germany some 37 per cent of women are working, again most are full-time, but in Germany the relative extent of part-time compared to full-time work is even greater than in the two other countries.

Women's employment and work-role attitudes

Prior research indicates that women who work have a more pro-feminist outlook with regard to a range of issues, including the labour-force participation of women (see Davis and Robinson, 1991). This is also true of men whose wives work (Smith, 1985). This can be seen in Table 4, which presents the distributions of attitudinal responses for working women and men whose wives work. Note that the sample sizes are reduced considerably and differentially by country, given the rates of female labour-force participation (see Table 3). These results reveal uniformly higher levels of support for women's work roles than in the samples taken as a whole (see Table 2), both for part-time and full-time work. The gender differences found earlier regarding support for non-familial work roles for women (in Table 2) are also present in Table 4, although the smaller sample sizes appear to have reduced some of them to non-significance. As above, the largest gender differences occur with respect to the situation where pre-school children are present.

We also expected, given prior research (see e.g. Scott and Duncombe, 1991), that women who work full-time are more supportive of full-time work than those who work part-time. Similarly, we expected that men with full-time working wives would be more supportive of this type of work. Table 5 presents the comparison of attitudes toward women's work roles for women who work part-time versus full-time, and (except for Great Britain) the comparison of attitudes for married men whose wives work part-time versus full-time. Generally speaking,

those women who currently work part-time are decisively more likely to prefer part-time options in the women's work-role questions, and those working full-time are more likely in general to choose the full-time options. The same is true of married men, that is, men with spouses who work full-time are more likely to choose full-time options and those with part-time working wives the part-time options. This consistency between current employment behaviour and attitudes is not unexpected, and we suspect that it results from the dual processes of selection and socialization. That is, we suspect that particular attitudes (e.g. a preference for part-time work in a given situation) predispose people to behave in certain ways (e.g. to engage in part-time work), and at the same time engaging in particular behaviour (e.g. part-time work) promotes attitudinal outcomes supportive of such behaviour. Of course, given that the studies analysed here are cross-sectional, we cannot sort out the causal nature of the consistency of attitudes and current labour-force experiences. Nor do the data presented in Table 5 take account of the current family circumstances of these working women. Consistency of attitudes and labour-force experience should increase when the circumstances posed by the attitudinal questions coincide with the women's own situations.

Previous labour-force experience and women's work-role attitudes

There is another approach we can take to examining the influences of labour-force experiences on the development of attitudes toward women's work roles. We can compare the attitude reports of women who differ in their previous labour-force experiences at various stages of life. The ISSP questionnaire included a set of questions which were only put to married women who had ever raised children, and which inquired about their own labour-force involvement during each life-stage. These questions allow us to examine the extent to which present situation-specific attitudes are linked to previous life-course experiences. For this purpose we scale the attitude responses for the work-role measures from 1 to 3, where 3 = work full time, 2 = work part time, and

TABLE 6 Mean attitudes towards work roles among women who had children by labour-force status at life-cycle stages: West Germany, United States, and Great Britain

	West Germany					United States					Britain				
	WRK- NOKID	WRK- BABY	WRK- SCH	WRK- GROWN	Ave N	WRK- NOKID	WRK- BABY	WRK- SCH	WRK- GROWN	Ave N	WRK- NOKID	WRK- BABY	WRK- SCH	WRK- GROWN	Ave N
Actual Behaviour at Life-Stage:															
After marriage, before children															
1. stayed at home	2.40	1.16	1.36	1.91	156	2.65	1.53	2.16	2.60	74	2.76	1.20	1.84	2.52	59
2. worked part-time	2.54	1.29	1.57	2.15	38	2.62	1.44	2.03	2.68	34	2.64	1.27	2.03	2.38	36
3. worked full-time	2.84	1.30	1.59	2.36	532	2.90	1.62	2.31	2.90	168	2.89	1.36	2.04	2.60	265
Total	2.73	1.27	1.54	2.25	726	2.80	1.57	2.24	2.72	276	2.84	1.32	2.00	2.57	360
F	46.18 ^(b)	4.84 ^(a)	10.65 ^(b)	24.02 ^(b)		9.80 ^(b)	1.11	3.64 ^(a)	2.86		7.40 ^(b)	2.84	7.37 ^(b)	2.95 ^(a)	
With child under school age															
1. stayed at home	2.66	1.13	1.39	2.12	512	2.78	1.32	2.04	2.68	150	2.78	1.14	1.92	2.50	226
2. worked part-time	2.81	1.60	1.83	2.44	126	2.75	1.82	2.36	2.78	61	2.91	1.62	2.11	2.65	96
3. worked full-time	2.93	1.76	2.01	2.66	68	2.90	2.02	2.63	2.82	63	2.94	1.84	2.23	2.69	32
Total	2.72	1.28	1.53	2.24	706	2.80	1.57	2.24	2.73	274	2.83	1.33	2.00	2.56	360
F	8.69 ^(b)	105.78 ^(b)	70.99 ^(b)	24.31 ^(b)		1.84	32.56 ^(b)	23.11 ^(b)	1.77		4.44 ^(a)	63.55 ^(b)	11.75 ^(b)	3.76 ^(a)	
After youngest started school															
1. stayed at home	2.60	1.13	1.30	2.02	361	2.64	1.38	1.92	2.59	78	2.70	1.08	1.76	2.33	82
2. worked part-time	2.78	1.38	1.83	2.36	130	2.80	1.57	2.13	2.66	61	2.83	1.30	2.01	2.54	158
3. worked full-time	2.91	1.74	2.10	2.76	54	2.88	1.77	2.55	2.83	90	2.87	1.64	2.22	2.74	53
Total	2.68	1.25	1.52	2.19	545	2.78	1.58	2.22	2.70	229	2.80	1.30	1.98	2.51	293
F	9.60 ^(b)	51.00 ^(b)	106.06 ^(b)	32.58 ^(b)		4.57 ^(a)	7.03 ^(b)	25.49 ^(b)	4.20 ^(a)		3.10 ^(a)	21.94 ^(b)	20.09 ^(b)	9.89 ^(b)	
After children left home															
1. stayed at home	2.52	1.10	1.26	1.84	206	2.49	1.38	1.81	2.40	39	2.61	1.11	1.86	2.29	36
2. worked part-time	2.63	1.32	1.58	2.14	60	2.81	1.44	2.11	2.52	27	2.72	1.24	1.97	2.34	67
3. worked full-time	2.87	1.49	1.80	2.65	73	2.80	1.63	2.32	2.83	90	2.83	1.35	2.04	2.74	53
Total	2.61	1.22	1.43	2.07	339	2.72	1.54	2.16	2.67	156	2.73	1.24	1.97	2.46	156
F	8.72 ^(b)	20.80 ^(b)	32.90 ^(b)	37.82 ^(b)		4.49 ^(a)	2.19	9.17 ^(b)	9.74 ^(b)		2.14	2.64	1.66	10.26 ^(b)	

1 = not working. Note again that the sample sizes are considerably reduced because of the restricted target group for these questions.

These results, presented in Table 6, give strong confirmation to the hypothesis that prior life-course experiences are linked to present work-role attitudes. In virtually all cases, holding life-stage constant, those with differing employment experiences differ systematically in their attitudes. In all but a few cases the F-ratios from an analysis of variance are statistically significant at rather low levels of Type I error. Thus, we can conclude that those women who experienced a particular type of labour-force involvement at a previous stage of life now hold attitudes which tend in the direction of support for that behaviour. It is, of course, not at all clear whether attitudes are exogenous or endogenous with respect to prior labour-force experience, but as above, there does appear to be a consistency between behaviour and attitudes.

The presence of pre-school children

All of the data presented up to this point have indicated uniformly that the absence of young children in the household was a major consideration in the acceptability of labour-force participation of women. This may lead to the expectation that those who have young children at home are less likely to express attitudes that favour the labour-force participation of women. On the other hand, one might actually hypothesize the opposite, that those with young children are likely to favour labour-force involvement of women because (especially if they are working) they are more likely to see the benefits of labour-force participation and perceive minimal harm to their children.

We first examined whether differences in attitudes were associated with whether or not children were present in the household. However, there were no systematic differences between those with children and those without. We then tested our hypothesis that the crucial distinction for work-role attitudes is whether or not pre-school children are present. Table 7 presents a comparison of respondents who have at least one child of pre-school age with those whose children are older. Note that these

tabulations are based on only those respondents who have children in their household. These results indicate that those respondents with young children are generally more pro-feminist than other parents, even on the relatively more difficult items WRKBABY and WRKSCH. These results are, of course, confounded with age, as those with young children are also likely to be younger than the respondents with older children. Consequently, we need to take birth cohort into account in estimating the effects of the presence of young children on attitudes towards women's work roles. We investigate this further in the following section.

Intra-country multi-variate analysis

In this section we develop a multi-variate model for the prediction of attitudes towards women's work roles, drawing upon the findings given above. Specifically we employ a modified version of Multiple Classification Analysis (see Andrews *et al.*, 1973).⁷ For the purposes of this analysis we relied upon the composite score described earlier which is made up of all four attitude measures. We estimated the parameters of four models involving the relationships of various family and labour-force experiences to women's work-role attitudes in the presence of a set of multi-variate control variables. First, we regressed the attitude scale on gender, birth cohort, marital status, and level of schooling. We used three categories to represent birth cohort: those born before 1930, those born between 1930 and 1949, and those born after 1950. We predicted that the older birth cohorts would show significantly less tolerance for women working outside the home and that the youngest birth cohorts would be among the strongest supporters for this activity. We used two categories to represent marital status, combining all categories of the unmarried into one. We predicted that those persons living in marital circumstances would be less supportive of women working, due to the relatively greater economic need to work among unmarried women.⁸ Level of schooling was measured using a seven-category scheme, as described in the Appendix. We have tried to preserve as much fine-grained detail as possible in the education variable within each country, while

TABLE 7 *Attitudes towards women's work roles by age of children, gender, and country: West Germany, United States, and Great Britain*

Do you think that women should work outside the home full-time, part-time or not at all under these circumstances:	West Germany				United States				Britain			
	Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women	
	Child		Child		Child		Child		Child		Child	
	6-17	1-5	6-17	1-5	6-17	1-5	6-17	1-5	6-17	1-5	6-17	1-5
A. After marrying and before there are children (WRKNOKID)												
Not at all	6.3	3.3	4.5	1.9	4.4	4.0	3.2	2.4	1.4	0.0	0.7	0.0
Part-time	23.3	14.9	21.7	9.7	18.9	24.0	10.2	11.0	9.8	4.3	6.3	1.7
Full-time	70.4	81.8	73.7	88.4	76.7	72.0	86.6	86.6	88.8	95.7	93.0	98.3
chi-square	6.0	$p = .05$	19.6	$p = .00$	0.7	$p = .70$	0.2	$p = .90$	2.1	$p = .34$	2.5	$p = .24$
B. When there is a child under school age (WRKBABY)												
Not at all	82.0	71.4	73.8	70.3	59.6	52.3	49.4	40.6	75.9	44.0	59.6	52.2
Part-time	17.3	26.1	22.8	28.3	28.7	28.4	37.8	43.8	23.1	51.7	37.5	44.9
Full-time	0.8	2.5	3.5	1.4	11.7	19.3	12.8	15.6	1.1	4.3	2.9	2.9
chi-square	5.8	$p = .05$	4.6	$p = .10$	2.3	$p = .31$	8.1	$p = .02$	15.8	$p = .00$	1.2	$p = .56$
C. After the youngest child starts school (WRKSCH)												
Not at all	55.6	43.9	45.3	41.6	11.1	11.5	7.6	3.9	14.9	2.2	8.9	0.0
Part-time	42.5	50.0	49.6	56.1	47.5	49.0	45.6	50.8	74.0	77.3	74.3	79.8
Full-time	2.0	6.1	5.1	2.3	41.1	39.4	46.8	45.3	11.1	20.5	16.7	20.2
chi-square	6.9	$p = .03$	4.3	$p = .11$	0.1	$p = .96$	13.6	$p = .00$	7.0	$p = .03$	7.0	$p = .03$
D. After the children leave home (WRKGRWN)												
Not at all	17.6	10.0	11.2	7.4	6.5	4.0	5.1	2.4	2.4	0.0	2.1	0.7
Part-time	52.5	43.6	49.2	39.5	19.4	29.3	16.6	13.8	31.5	25.5	28.8	22.2
Full-time	29.8	46.4	39.6	53.2	74.2	66.7	78.2	83.7	66.1	74.5	68.2	27.1
chi-square	9.9	$p = .01$	9.6	$p = .01$	2.9	$p = .24$	1.9	$p = .39$	1.6	$p = .45$	2.5	$p = .29$
Sample size	270	129	428	235	112	118	179	138	155	53	222	74

at the same time trying to keep the number of categories roughly equivalent. We make no pretence that the categories of this variable are comparable across countries, given the vastly different systems of education, but for purposes of intra-country analysis we have a variable that represents well the main schooling distinctions present within each system. Given past research on sex-role attitudes, we expected the educated respondents to report attitudes more approving of the labour-force participation of women.

This first model is considered a baseline model. The results are given in the first column of Tables 8, 9, and 10 for West Germany, the USA, and Great Britain respectively.⁹ These results confirm our earlier finding regarding the male-female differences in all countries. They

also bear out our expectations regarding the influence of marital status, cohort, and educational level. Birth cohort and level of schooling are perhaps the most important predictors of women's work-role attitudes.

Our second model evaluates the basic model (minus marital status) separately for married and unmarried respondents in order to ascertain the extent of interaction between marital status and the other basic parameters of the model. These results (see Model II in Tables 8-10) show that, with the exception of Great Britain, the effect of gender is roughly equivalent for both marital status categories. The gender effect appears to be considerably stronger in the United States than in the other countries, and in Britain gender differences are absent among

TABLE 8 *Multi-variate models for the prediction of attitudes towards women's work roles: West Germany*

Predictor	Model I	Model II		Model III		Model IV	
		Not married	Married	Males	Females	Males	Females
Constant	1.929 ^(c)	1.984 ^(c)	1.891 ^(c)	1.905 ^(c)	1.947 ^(c)	1.838 ^(c)	1.947 ^(c)
Gender	beta = .064 ^(c)	beta = .085 ^(b)	beta = .072 ^(b)				
Female	.025 ^(c)	.031 ^(b)	.029 ^(b)				
Male	-.032 ^(c)	-.048 ^(b)	-.033 ^(b)				
Birth cohort	beta = .299 ^(c)	beta = .398 ^(c)	beta = .233 ^(c)	beta = .286 ^(c)	beta = .299 ^(c)	beta = .116 ^(a)	beta = .200 ^(c)
Pre-1930	-.173 ^(c)	-.227 ^(c)	-.139 ^(c)	-.174 ^(c)	-.167 ^(c)	-.059 ^(b)	-.100 ^(c)
1930-49	.002	-.038	.015	.010	-.001	.025	-.024
1950-70	.147 ^(c)	.167 ^(c)	.124 ^(c)	.130 ^(c)	.153 ^(c)	.061	.111 ^(c)
Marital status	beta = .055 ^(b)			beta = .068 ^(a)	beta = .052 ^(a)		beta = .007
Married	-.020 ^(b)			-.023 ^(a)	-.021		-.003
Not married	.030 ^(b)			.040 ^(a)	.026 ^(a)		.004
Schooling level	beta = .142 ^(c)	beta = .131 ^(c)	beta = .153 ^(c)	beta = .109 ^(a)	beta = .178 ^(c)	beta = .105	beta = .160 ^(c)
I	-.098	-.089	-.096	.002	-.136 ^(a)	.018	-.123 ^(a)
II	-.045 ^(c)	-.030 ^(a)	-.047 ^(c)	-.042 ^(c)	-.046 ^(c)	-.032 ^(b)	-.039 ^(c)
III	.024	-.025	-.058 ^(b)	.034	.018	.065 ^(a)	.007
IV	.071	.031	.098	.015	.120	-.057	.086
V-VI	.090 ^(c)	.065 ^(c)	.082 ^(a)	.056	.136 ^(c)	.043	.139 ^(c)
VII	.159 ^(c)	.182 ^(c)	.152 ^(c)	.093 ^(a)	.243 ^(c)	.056	.199 ^(c)
Female work						beta = .299 ^(c)	beta = .231 ^(c)
Not working						-.093 ^(c)	-.075 ^(c)
Part-time						.161 ^(c)	.077 ^(b)
Full-time						.177 ^(c)	.167 ^(c)
Pre-school						beta = .124 ^(b)	beta = .007
No < 6 child						-.022 ^(b)	-.001
< 6 yr child						.124 ^(b)	.007
R ²	.138	.176	.097	.124	.148	.164	.186
Sample N	2703	1097	1606	1189	1514	755	1514

Notes: (a) $p < .05$
 (b) $p < .01$
 (c) $p < .001$

TABLE 9 *Multi-variate models for the prediction of attitudes towards women's work roles: United States*

Predictor	Model I	Model II		Model III		Model IV	
		Not married	Married	Males	Females	Males	Females
Constant	2.283 ^(c)	2.328 ^(c)	2.244 ^(c)	2.200 ^(c)	2.346 ^(c)	2.163 ^(c)	2.346 ^(c)
Gender	beta = .156 ^(c)	beta = .166 ^(c)	beta = .140 ^(c)				
Female	.065 ^(c)	.060 ^(c)	.067 ^(c)				
Male	-.086 ^(c)	-.102 ^(c)	-.071 ^(c)				
Birth cohort	beta = .215 ^(c)	beta = .212 ^(c)	beta = .227 ^(c)	beta = .214 ^(c)	beta = .224 ^(c)	beta = .086	beta = .150 ^(b)
Pre-1930	-.144 ^(c)	-.134 ^(c)	-.156 ^(c)	-.169 ^(c)	-.129 ^(c)	-.052	-.071 ^(a)
1930-49	.004	-.017	.015	.007	-.001	-.003	-.032
1950-70	.106 ^(c)	.096 ^(c)	.121 ^(c)	.102 ^(c)	.111 ^(c)	.058	.083 ^(c)
Marital status	beta = .068 ^(a)			beta = .054	beta = .086 ^(a)		beta = .073 ^(a)
Married	-.031 ^(a)			-.022	-.040 ^(a)		-.035 ^(a)
Not married	.035 ^(a)			.034	.037 ^(a)		.033 ^(a)
Schooling level	beta = .186 ^(c)	beta = .200 ^(c)	beta = .193 ^(c)	beta = .185 ^(b)	beta = .224 ^(c)	beta = .150	beta = .201 ^(c)
I	-.366 ^(c)	-.299 ^(c)	-.444 ^(c)	-.326 ^(c)	-.407 ^(c)	-.250 ^(a)	-.367 ^(c)
II	-.073	-.086	-.060	.022	-.130 ^(b)	.003	-.115 ^(b)
III	-.020	-.009	-.033	-.064	.014	.004	.026
IV	.021	.026	.018	-.010	.041	-.033	.040
V	-.003	-.025	.021	-.006	-.002	.004	-.005
VI	.084	.157 ^(b)	.030	.149 ^(a)	.021	.055	.004
VII	.139 ^(b)	.153 ^(a)	.134 ^(a)	.094	.187 ^(b)	.155	.162 ^(b)
Female work						beta = .369 ^(c)	beta = .198 ^(c)
Not working						-.166 ^(c)	-.082 ^(c)
Part-time						-.049	-.028
Full-time						.237 ^(c)	.114 ^(c)
Pre-school						beta = .048	beta = .046
No <6 child						-.015	-.010
<6 yr child						.049	.045
R ²	.123	.107	.120	.086	.121	.175	.148
Sample N	1253	586	667	540	713	323	767

Notes: (a) $p < .05$ (b) $p < .01$ (c) $p < .001$

married respondents. The finding of a stronger gender difference in the USA is consistent with the results reported by Davis and Robinson (1991) regarding national differences in gender effects on attitudes toward gender inequality. The results for the other variables show basically that their effects do not appear to interact with marital status, and therefore that we can consider these effects as additive.

The third model evaluates the baseline model (minus gender) separately for men and women in order to ascertain whether the effects of the baseline model interact with gender. The results for this equation (model III in Tables 8-10) indicate that the effects observed in our baseline model are strongly present in all countries.

Educational level appears to be a somewhat stronger predictor of attitudes for women than for men in West Germany and the United States, but the reverse is true in Great Britain.

The fourth model adds two critical variables to the equation: female labour-force involvement and the presence of a pre-school child in the home. As indicated in our prior analysis and presentation of data, both of these factors are important for understanding attitudes toward women's work roles, since they assess current life experiences that are likely to help shape such attitudes. With the addition of these variables we can assess the unique effects of family and work experience, net of the control variables in the baseline model. Because of the potential

TABLE 10 *Multi-variate models for the prediction of attitudes towards women's work roles: Great Britain*

Predictor	Model I	Model II		Model III		Model IV	
		Not married	Married	Males	Females	Males	Females
Constant	2.183 ^(c)	2.229 ^(c)	2.164 ^(c)	2.151 ^(c)	2.208 ^(c)	2.139 ^(c)	2.208 ^(c)
Gender	beta = .079 ^(b)	beta = .187 ^(c)	beta = .032				
Female	.027 ^(b)	.058 ^(c)	.012				
Male	-.034 ^(b)	-.085 ^(c)	-.014				
Birth cohort	beta = .354 ^(c)	beta = .350 ^(c)	beta = .354 ^(c)	beta = .285 ^(c)	beta = .436 ^(c)	beta = .230 ^(c)	beta = .359 ^(c)
Pre-1930	-.177 ^(c)	-.173 ^(c)	-.180 ^(c)	-.120 ^(c)	-.233 ^(c)	-.022	-.188 ^(c)
1930-49	-.051 ^(c)	-.045	-.045 ^(b)	-.065 ^(b)	-.038	-.086 ^(c)	-.038
1950-70	.154 ^(c)	.114 ^(c)	.172 ^(c)	.139 ^(a)	.171 ^(c)	.136 ^(c)	.144 ^(c)
Marital status	beta = .045			beta = .021	beta = .115 ^(c)		beta = .125 ^(c)
Married	-.011			.005	-.029 ^(b)		-.032 ^(c)
Not married	.028			-.014	.066 ^(b)		.072 ^(c)
Schooling level	beta = .174 ^(c)	beta = .238 ^(b)	beta = .165 ^(c)	beta = .236 ^(c)	beta = .116	beta = .233 ^(c)	beta = .104
II	-.056 ^(c)	-.093 ^(c)	-.046 ^(b)	-.090 ^(c)	-.030	-.073 ^(c)	-.027
III	-.031	-.030	-.026	-.035	-.040	-.036	-.036
IV	.016	.046	.008	.028	.008	.004	.006
V	.024	.103 ^(a)	-.025	.016	.036	.005	.042
VI	.046	.034	.048	.052	.031	.012	.028
VII	.187 ^(c)	.210 ^(b)	.177 ^(c)	.216 ^(c)	.145 ^(b)	.232 ^(c)	.126 ^(a)
Female work						beta = .304 ^(c)	beta = .115 ^(b)
Not working						-.121 ^(c)	-.042 ^(b)
Working						.126 ^(c)	.046 ^(b)
Pre-school						beta = .016	beta = .077
No <6 child						-.004	-.015
<6 yr child						.013	.059
R ²	.196	.255	.173	.158	.231	.203	.239
Sample N	1227	375	852	546	681	393	681

Notes: (a) $p < .05$ (b) $p < .01$ (c) $p < .001$

importance of differences between men and women, we estimate this model separately by gender. In the case of men we estimate the model only for married men, since the female employment variable does not apply to unmarried men and the number of unmarried men raising children is relatively small compared to married men in this category.

The results for our fourth model (see Model IV in Tables 8-10) indicate that in all national contexts, variations in female employment status strongly predict work-role attitudes. Among women there is a very clear difference in approval for women's work between employed and non-employed respondents. Thus, this is further confirmation of the attitude-behaviour consistency among women noted above. This relationship is even stronger among men in all

national contexts: men whose wives work on a full-time basis are the most approving of women working, those with wives who work part-time are somewhat less so, and the least approving are those men whose wives do not work outside the home.

As we hypothesized above, among women (and perhaps among men as well) the presence of children may be an important ingredient in understanding attitudes toward women's work roles. The results in Model IV for the presence of children show a small effect on attitudes in most cases, but the magnitude of the effect is surprisingly small. Among West German women the difference is non-existent, indicating that the presence of pre-school children does not make them any more or less likely to think that women should work or stay home

TABLE 11 *Gender differences in perceptions of the suitability of child-care arrangements by gender and country: West Germany, United States, and Great Britain*

Think of a child under 3 years old whose parents both have full-time jobs. How suitable do you think each of these child-care arrangements would be for the child?						
	West Germany		United States		Britain	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
A. A public daycare centre?						
Very suitable	18.5	16.0	21.7	20.9	28.9	34.2
Somewhat suitable	34.9	34.0	45.9	41.7	40.9	40.4
Not very suitable	29.1	30.0	21.2	22.8	20.7	18.1
Not at all suitable	17.4	20.1	11.2	14.6	9.6	7.3
chi-square	5.4	$p = .14$	4.5	$p = .21$	5.4	$p = .14$
B. A private daycare centre?						
Very suitable	16.9	15.5	33.4	36.1	29.9	36.4
Somewhat suitable	39.3	38.6	49.5	45.5	47.7	44.9
Not very suitable	29.4	28.6	10.7	12.0	14.2	13.5
Not at all suitable	14.4	17.3	6.4	6.5	8.2	5.1
chi-square	4.4	$p = .22$	2.1	$p = .55$	8.5	$p = .04$
C. A babysitter?						
Very suitable	9.0	10.0	26.4	31.1	15.7	19.5
Somewhat suitable	30.7	30.3	47.3	48.8	37.7	44.5
Not very suitable	36.2	35.7	19.1	13.4	32.2	26.8
Not at all suitable	24.2	23.0	7.2	6.8	14.4	9.1
chi-square	1.2	$p = .76$	8.9	$p = .01$	15.8	$p = .00$
D. A neighbour or friend?						
Very suitable	7.1	10.4	25.2	31.5	9.6	11.1
Somewhat suitable	35.7	36.4	46.8	48.0	30.6	39.0
Not very suitable	34.5	33.3	19.7	15.3	39.6	37.6
Not at all suitable	22.7	19.9	8.3	5.2	20.2	12.3
chi-square	11.3	$p = .01$	12.8	$p = .01$	18.2	$p = .00$
E. A relative?						
Very suitable	22.0	26.5	49.6	56.5	33.8	47.3
Somewhat suitable	42.0	43.6	38.2	35.1	42.0	38.0
Not very suitable	22.1	18.2	7.7	6.0	16.1	10.9
Not at all suitable	13.9	11.7	4.5	2.4	8.1	3.8
chi-square	13.9	$p = .00$	9.4	$p = .02$	31.0	$p = .00$
Sample size	1335	1659	611	803	587	720

across the general set of attitude measures. Among West German men, on the other hand, there is a significant difference in the predicted direction: men with young children support women working. The relationship also exists in a similar direction in the USA and Great Britain, but the differences are not significant.

Explaining national differences in attitudes

Except for the initial presentation of the marginal differences between countries, our

analysis to this point has focused only on intra-country patterns. At this point we turn to a set of analyses that attempt to account for the observed inter-country differences. As we indicated in passing in our earlier examination of marginals, one possible explanation for inter-country differences in attitudes toward women's work roles is the existence of differing normative patterns and institutional structures that regulate behaviour. In a general sense, this is the most plausible set of considerations because, as we

observed earlier (see Table 3), the actual employment behaviour patterns of women across countries seems to nicely parallel the attitude differences we found. US women are more likely to work and to engage in full-time work, while at the same time Americans seem to hold the most approving attitudes toward women working in all conceivable situations. By contrast, West German women are considerably less likely to be participating in the labour-force, either part- or full-time, and German attitudes are the least supportive of women working.

This explanation can actually operate at two different levels, the micro- and macro-social levels. First, individuals in a given country may be more likely to approve of work roles for women because of the favourability of their own experiences for promoting pro-feminist attitudes, e.g. because they are more likely to be working. At the same time, regardless of the individual's own labour-force position, their attitudes may be influenced in a particular direction because of the normative climate and institutionalized behaviour. In addition to the possibility that compositional differences between countries in the individual-level factors promote these attitudes, there are clearly normative and/or institutional explanations that should join the micro-level explanations.

Earlier in the paper we speculated that national differences in the availability of suitable child-care arrangements may be partly responsible for cross-cultural differences in the acceptability of women working. Daycare provision in Germany and Great Britain is decidedly scarcer than in the United States, and this is reflected in the 1988 ISSP data. The 1988 ISSP survey asked respondents to 'Think of a child under 3 years old whose parents both have full-time jobs. How suitable do you think each of these child-care arrangements would be for the child? A public daycare centre? A private daycare centre? A babysitter? A neighbour or friend? A relative?' The response categories used were: very suitable, somewhat suitable, not very suitable, not at all suitable (and can't choose).¹⁰

In Table 11 we present the sample distributions of these measures by country and gender. These results indicate that there are substantial national differences in the perceived

suitability of available child-care arrangements. The British find their public daycare facilities to be relatively more suitable than Americans or West Germans. Private daycare facilities are seen as equally suitable in the USA and Britain, but both are substantially higher in perceived suitability than in West Germany. The remaining forms of child-care—babysitters, neighbours/friends, and relatives—are perceived as dramatically more acceptable in the United States than in either West Germany or Great Britain.

We tested our hypotheses concerning the impact of perceptions of child-care arrangements on the acceptability of women working by examining a set of multi-variate models. In these models we predict attitudes toward women's work roles on the basis of (a) a set of dummy variables representing the countries, (b) a set of individual-level variables representing relevant compositional differences in the labour-force status of women, and (c) an index representing the 'suitability' of child-care arrangements. Because the main national differences exist with respect to the two situations of family life involving the presence of young children (WKBABY and WKSCH), this analysis focuses only on these two measures. The results of this analysis are given in Table 12, separately for women and men.¹¹

The first model for these two measures expresses the differences between countries in attitudes toward the work roles of women in the situations where there is a pre-school child in the family (WRKBABY) and where there is a young child in school (WKSCH). Consistent with the above presentation, these results show that men and women in West Germany are significantly less approving of women working in these situations, whereas in the USA considerably more support is expressed for the labour-force participation of women. These differences are most pronounced in the WKSCH measure, and are slightly stronger among women than among men. If we enter a control for the objective labour-force status of women (in the case of men the status of their wives) (see model II in Table 12), we can explain some of these differences. The differences are reduced by from 10–15 per cent among women and from 5–10 per cent for men, neither of

TABLE 12 *Multi-variate models for the prediction of attitudes towards women's work roles in Germany, the United States, and Great Britain, by gender*

Females (n = 2792)						
Predictor	Model I		Model II		Model III	
	WKBABY	WKSCH	WKBABY	WKSCH	WKBABY	WKSCH
Constant	1.386 ^(c)	1.842 ^(c)	1.396 ^(c)	1.842 ^(c)	1.385 ^(c)	1.847 ^(c)
Country	beta = .243 ^(c)	beta = .474 ^(c)	beta = .208 ^(c)	beta = .430 ^(c)	beta = .165 ^(c)	beta = .369 ^(c)
West Germany	-.104 ^(c)	-.281 ^(c)	-.005 ^(c)	-.256 ^(c)	-.055 ^(c)	-.221 ^(c)
USA	.238 ^(c)	.428 ^(c)	.205 ^(c)	.385 ^(c)	.166 ^(c)	.333 ^(c)
Great Britain	-.014	.194 ^(c)	-.022	.184 ^(c)	-.052 ^(b)	.154 ^(c)
Female						
Employment			beta = .223 ^(c)	beta = .268 ^(c)	beta = .193 ^(c)	beta = .240 ^(c)
Not working			-.106 ^(c)	-.145 ^(c)	-.092 ^(c)	-.131 ^(c)
Works part-time			.066 ^(b)	.092 ^(c)	.045	.073 ^(b)
Works full-time			.183 ^(c)	.253 ^(c)	.163 ^(c)	.226 ^(c)
Suitability						
child-care					beta = .185 ^(c)	beta = .173 ^(c)
index					.163 ^(c)	.173 ^(c)
R ²	.058	.224	.106	.293	.140	.319
Sample N	2792	2792	2792	2792	2570	2570
Males (n = 2199)						
Constant	1.310 ^(c)	1.770 ^(c)	1.311 ^(c)	1.771 ^(c)	1.320 ^(c)	1.790 ^(c)
Country	beta = .197 ^(c)	beta = .427 ^(c)	beta = .173 ^(c)	beta = .405 ^(c)	beta = .119 ^(c)	beta = .344 ^(c)
West Germany	-.078 ^(c)	-.253 ^(c)	-.070 ^(c)	-.242 ^(c)	-.044 ^(c)	-.210 ^(c)
USA	.185 ^(c)	.378 ^(c)	.166 ^(c)	.348 ^(c)	.112 ^(c)	.279 ^(c)
Great Britain	-.010	.202 ^(c)	-.009	.204 ^(c)	-.020	.180 ^(c)
Female						
Employment			beta = .192 ^(c)	beta = .246 ^(c)	beta = .184 ^(c)	beta = .237 ^(c)
Wife not						
working			-.132 ^(c)	-.204 ^(c)	-.128 ^(c)	-.237 ^(c)
Wife works			.101 ^(c)	.148 ^(c)	.096 ^(c)	.137 ^(c)
No spouse			.064 ^(c)	.106 ^(c)	.063 ^(c)	.203 ^(c)
Suitability						
child-care					beta = .195 ^(c)	beta = .205 ^(c)
index					.163 ^(c)	.203 ^(c)
R ²	.038	.182	.073	.241	.114	.293
Sample N	2199	2199	2194	2195	1984	1984

Notes: (a) $p < .05$ (b) $p < .01$ (c) $p < .001$

which seems substantial. Thus, compositional differences among countries in labour-force participation rates of women do not account for much of the observed inter-country difference in attitudes. By adding the index of perceived suitability of child-care arrangements to the model (see model III in Table 12), some of the remaining differences can be reduced, but

again, the reduction in differences is small. When considered together, the labour-force composition and perceived suitability of child-care alternatives can explain about one-third of the inter-country differences in WKBABY for women and about two-fifths of these differences for men; and these factors can account for only about one-fifth of the

inter-country differences in WKSCH for both men and women. Clearly, there are additional factors needed to entirely explain the inter-country differences in attitudes, including other compositional factors, normative differences in labour-market activities of men and women, and institutional factors associated with the care and nurture of children.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Traditionally, modern society has differentially allocated men and women to different social roles in the division of labour. Although such a gender-based allocation of jobs is not necessarily inevitable, because of differences in reproductive and lactation functions, women are much more likely to be engaged in the care and nurture of children. There is also clearly a role for the father in child-care, but the traditional father role is one that maintains a certain distance from children by virtue of his contribution to the labour-force. Whether industrialization brought this about, or simply reinforced certain natural tendencies, we are at the present time facing a parallel transition for women, one which is away from a sole preoccupation with children and family life and towards increasing commitments to the job and workplace. And as our research shows, these changes are found to be acceptable for the most part, and are only called into question when the situation involves children.

The overwhelming majority of men and women in all three countries approve of women working in situations where the care of children is not an issue. In such situations few want women to stay at home. By contrast, when there are pre-school children in the home the majority do not approve of women working outside the home. Americans are the most approving in this situation, and West Germans the least. Levels of approval for women working increase when young children are in school, and national differences persist in this context.

In all three countries women are more pro-feminist in their attitudes toward women working than are men. These differences are particularly apparent for those attitude

questions that measure the approval of women working when there are young children in the home. Regardless of national boundaries, men are much less likely to approve of women working when there are pre-school children at home and when young children are in school. Smaller gender differences exist in attitudes toward women working when there are no children present. These differences are not removed by taking in account the different experiences of men and women: even among men with working wives attitudes are less pro-feminist than among working women. In addition to gender, there are a number of factors that are important in terms of accounting for intra-country variation in work-role attitudes. One of the most significant factors linked to sex-role attitude variation is the labour-force involvement of women. Those women who work are predictably more pro-feminist in their attitudes than those who do not; and among men, those whose wives work are more likely to approve of women working. Whether this represents the impact of 'experience' on attitudes, or whether it reflects 'selection', in the sense that those persons with pro-feminist attitudes are more likely to work (or have working wives), cannot be determined within the present framework. There is, as we noted above, a tendency toward consistency between attitudes and behaviour, regardless of its source. Birth cohort and level of schooling are also important predictors of attitudes towards women working. More recent cohorts and more educated persons are more approving of a labour-force role for women. In the United States and Great Britain marital status is predictive of attitudes for women, with unmarried respondents showing the most approval of women working. Somewhat surprisingly, the presence of a pre-school child in the home does not appear to independently influence attitudes, except in a very small way. Those with a pre-school child at home are more supportive of women working than those without such a child at home, although the differences are generally not significant once other factors have been statistically controlled. This is somewhat ironic, given the fact that one of the most important attributes linked to attitudes for keeping women

at home in all countries is the presence of a pre-school child. Apparently people with pre-school children are just as likely to approve of women working in this situation as are other members of the population.

We reasoned that the observed inter-country differences are due to a number of differing normative and institutional differences that exist in the labour-force activities of women in West Germany, Great Britain and the USA. We examined the possibility that the actual labour-force experience of women (or for men that of their wives) would explain some of these differences, but in fact few differences could be explained in this way. Even after controlling for compositional differences in female labour-force participation, substantial inter-country differences remain. We also considered the possibility that country differences were in part due to the greater availability of child-care arrangements in the United States compared to Great Britain and West Germany. We considered this to be an especially powerful possibility given that the areas where inter-country differences are greatest refer to those situations where there are young children. We presented evidence supporting this interpretation, but it can account for only a small part of the inter-country differences. We concluded that there are clearly additional factors needed to explain the differences we observe in attitudes toward women working. We expect that future research on this topic will be most successful to the extent it considers additional compositional factors, normative differences in the labour-market activities of men and women, and institutional factors associated with the care and nurture of children.

NOTES

1. There is an extensive literature documenting changes in the family in the countries we consider here. For historical changes in the American context, see Masnick and Bane (1980), Cherlin (1981), Thornton and Freedman (1982, 1983), Waite (1981), Alwin (1990, 1991). In the case of Britain, consult Harding (1989), Ashford (1987), and Scott (1990). For changes in family experiences in Germany, see Nave-Herz (1988a, 1988b), Sommerkorn (1988), Hoepflinger (1987), Bundesminister für Jugend, Familie und Gesundheit (1976), Statistisches Bundesamt (1989), and Schmidtchen (1984).

2. See Mason and Lu (1988) for a discussion of changes in US sex-role attitudes between the late 1970s and early 1980s.
3. Scott (1990) did not include West Germany in her multinational comparison. It is worth adding, however, that among the five nations she compared, the British tended to be the most egalitarian in their rejection of the principle that women should stay home and care for the family while men have jobs and earn money, as well as in their agreement that a job is the best way for a woman to achieve independence. In this latter regard Americans are the least supportive of the notion that a woman can best achieve her independence by having a job. She suggests, however, that this difference is the result of a vagueness in the meaning of the term 'independence', which Americans may more likely interpret to mean 'financial independence' rather than 'personal autonomy'.
4. To this point the module of questions on the family have also been fielded in Hungary, the Netherlands, Ireland, Austria, and Italy. We do not include an analysis of these data here, because they were not publicly available when we initiated this research. Further analyses of the ISSP data-set are currently in process, but we believe there is sufficient theoretical basis for the comparison of women's work-role attitudes in Great Britain, West Germany, and the United States to warrant the serious attention we give it here.
5. We used the average score across the four items, allowing up to two missing values. This permits us to express the composite scores in the same units as the individual items. Estimates of coefficient-alpha for this scale are .69 in West Germany, .67 in Great Britain, and .72 in the United States. We should also note that due to the alignment of increased work opportunities with feminist goals, we refer to those work-role attitudes that express greater endorsement for women working as 'pro-feminist' in orientation.
6. Obviously, we must exclude several variables that may be relevant to the development of attitudes, due to their absence from the ISSP questionnaire. For example, there is almost certainly some marital homophily in attitudes, that is, through processes of selection, women with pro-feminist attitudes tend to marry men with pro-feminist attitudes and vice-versa. We have no information on the attitudes of the spouses of the ISSP respondents, so there is no way to take this set of factors into account.
7. The modified program was written in Gauss by Willard Rodgers of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. The modified MCA program allows the inclusion of continuous variables as covariates and provides standard errors and test-statistics for the sample estimates of model parameters. Neither of these features is present in the original MCA program.
8. As can be seen in Table 3, the overwhelming majority of respondents in each country are either married or never-married, especially among men. Owing to the possibility that there might be unique differences among the various categories of the unmarried, we regressed each of our attitude measures on a set

of dummy variables representing four categories: married, divorced, widowed, and never married. This analysis consistently revealed a tendency for the never-married category to express more pro-feminist sentiments and the widowed somewhat less so. However, this difference was substantially reduced once cohort differences were controlled. Though one might expect that women with pro-feminist attitudes have higher divorce probabilities, empirically divorced respondents were found to be trivially different from married ones. The results of these analyses justify pooling the various categories of the unmarried into one.

9. As noted, levels of statistical significance are indicated for these coefficients, as well as for the extent of predictive power for each set of variable categories. The level of predictive power for a given variable is expressed as a partial regression coefficient, or beta-coefficient. These coefficients result from the non-linear, effect-proportional rescaling of the categories of the predictor variables, using the adjusted category means as a basis for this rescaling. Finally, adjusted R-squared coefficients are provided for each model as a means of evaluating the predictive power of the model as a whole.
10. These questions are ambiguous in the sense that the respondent is not told whether s/he is to respond in terms of the perceived 'adequacy' of the arrangements or in terms of their own values regarding the 'desirability' of using such arrangements, regardless of their availability and adequacy. Thus, we risk a certain amount of error in using these responses as an indication of the perceived adequacy of child-care provision.
11. Because of the fact that we could not make a distinction between part-time and full-time work for the spouses of married men in Great Britain, for men the variable assessing women's labour-force status reflects only whether the spouses of married men worked or not.

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APPENDIX

Description of Education Codes

United States

Education Level	Description	Meaning
I.	Primary	Less than 7 years
II.	Intermediate	7-9 years
III.	Lower Secondary	10-11 years
IV.	Secondary	High School Diploma
V.	Post-secondary	Some college (1-3 years)
VI.	College	BA or BS degree
VII.	Post-graduate	MA, MS or more

West Germany

I.	Primary	School without qualifications
II.	Lower Secondary	Volks-/Hauptschulabschluss
III.	Middle school and vocational training	Mittlere Reife or equivalent ^(a)
IV.	Middle Secondary	Technical or Trade school (12 years) ^(b)
V.	Higher Secondary	Abitur (Hochschulreife) (13 years)
VI.	Post-secondary	More than Abitur, but not University Degree ^(c)
VII.	Post-graduate	MA or more

Great Britain

I.	Primary	— ^(d)
II.	Intermediate	No secondary qualifications
III.	Lower Secondary	CSE or equivalent qualifications
IV.	Middle Secondary	O-level qualifications or equivalent
V.	Higher Secondary	A-level qualifications or equivalent
VI.	Post-secondary	Higher Education below degree
VII.	University Degree	BA Degree or more

Note: (a) Realschulabschluss (Fachschulreife)

(b) Fachhochschulreife (Abschluss einer Fachoberschule, etc.)

(c) Fachhochschulabschluss

(d) Grouped with Intermediate in the British Data

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